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IDNR Conservation Police Help Kansas Authorities Catch Turkey Poachers From Illinois

Effingham County Men Plead Guilty in Kansas Turkey Poaching Case

SPRINGFIELD, IL – A joint investigation between the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Conservation Police, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has resulted in the prosecution of 11 Effingham County, Illinois men for violating multiple Kansas game laws.

“This is a prime example of multiple agencies working together to protect wildlife and I would like to commend everyone involved in this case,” IDNR Conservation Police Chief Rafael Gutierrez.

Information gathered by investigators revealed that a group of hunters have been traveling to Kansas to turkey hunt for several years. Among other game law violations, the group has been taking over the limit of turkeys. Illinois Conservation Police and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service interviewed the group of men in May of 2009 and seized eight whole turkeys, more than 20 sets of spurs, 24 beards, 19 packages of turkey meat, and five unused turkey permits.

Below is a list of the defendants and their crimes. In parenthesis is the county **in which they were prosecuted.**

- Ronald Esker (Geary County, Kansas) - misrepresentation to purchase a resident turkey permit, hunting turkeys without a valid license and taking turkeys without a valid permit. He was fined \$586 and lost his hunting privileges in Kansas and Illinois for two years.
- Shawn Lewis (Clay County, Kansas) - taking of turkeys without a valid

permit. He was fined \$636 and lost his hunting privileges in Kansas and Illinois for one year.

- Scott Huelsing (Osage County, Kansas) - unlawful possession of wild turkeys, failure to tag wild turkeys and hunting from a motor vehicle.
- Vincent Huelsing (Osage County, Kansas) - two counts of failure to tag wild turkeys.
- Paul Althoff (Osage County, Kansas) - failure to tag wild turkeys and hunting turkeys without a valid permit.
- James Dust (Osage County, Kansas) - two counts of taking wild turkeys without a valid permit.
- Tom Edwards (Osage County, Kansas) - failure to tag wild turkeys and taking of wild turkey without a valid permit.
- Jason Dust (Osage County, Kansas) - two counts of taking wild turkeys without a valid permit.
- Justin Dust (Osage County, Kansas) - taking wild turkeys without a valid permit.
- Frank Lee (Osage County, Kansas) - taking a hen turkey and hunting wild turkeys without a valid permit.
- Dennis Heuerman (Osage County, Kansas) - failure to tag wild turkeys and taking of wild turkeys without a valid permit.

Each individual charged in Osage County, Kansas entered a diversion agreement and paid a fine of \$493.50.

Anyone with information regarding illegal hunting activity is urged to contact your local conservation officer or the IDNR TIP hotline at (877) 236-7529.

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